Natural Areas
2014 Annual Report

Greenfield Park

Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture

John Dargle, Director

Milwaukee County University of Wisconsin Extension

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Natural Areas Program
Major Accomplishments 2014

1. Presentations at community events, workshops, schools, and conferences reached **833 citizens this past year**.

2. Through staff efforts and the substantial efforts of our partner organizations, we engaged **1,405 volunteers** who donated **16,246 hours** assisting in natural resource management projects.

3. The financial impact of our volunteers can never be overstated, because the value of their donated labor alone in 2014 amounted to a **$353,838 community investment** within the Park System's natural areas.

4. The Natural Areas Internship Program **(3 Interns)** had another great year with our interns gaining important natural resource career skills while donating **398 hours** to the Natural Areas Program.

5. Natural resource surveys of plants and wildlife, conducted by staff and citizen scientists, within the Park System's natural areas continue to provide the Parks Department with essential information for making management decisions. Surveys currently show **698 species** of plants, **17 species** of reptiles and amphibians, **7 species** of crayfish, **27 species** of mammals, and **281 species** of birds (migratory and breeding).

6. Partnerships are essential to our success, and in 2014 staff worked with **44 partner organizations** on a variety of important projects within the Park System's natural areas.

7. Continuation of the Natural Areas Program/Institute for Service Learning partnership with the **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee** for a total of 4 classes and **40 students**.

Natural Areas Program
Major Accomplishments 2014

8. Staff, volunteers, and partner organizations undertook restoration projects that enhanced and protected the ecology of **1,169 acres** of natural areas.

9. Maintenance and stabilization of **27 miles** of the Park Department's Forked Aster Hiking Trail System.

10. Development and implementation of **Restoration & Management Plans** for natural areas within the Park System. These plans will guide our management efforts over the next 10 years. Plans were implemented this year at : **Bender, Cudahy Nature Preserve, Falk, Grant, Greenfield, Grobschmidt, Jacobus, McGovern, Noyes, Warnimont, and a section of the Little Menomonee River Parkway.**

11. **Partnership Funding**. We received **$124,452** in external funding from Sustain Our Great Lakes (Great Lakes Restoration Initiative), the Fund for Lake Michigan, the WI Department of Natural Resources, Lake Park Friends, and the Southeast Wisconsin Chapter of Pheasants Forever.

12. Completion of our **aquatic invasive species surveys**, completion of the first year of **wildlife surveys** within the Milwaukee River Estuary Area of Concern (AOC), and completion of a two year Fund for Lake Michigan project to improve **wildlife habitat and water quality** at **Grant** and **Bender Parks**.

13. Staff, partners, and volunteers undertook restoration projects at **59 parks and parkways** in 2014. For a full list of sites and activities please see pages 4-7 in this report.

2014 Natural Areas Management Locations

Anderson Lake-Root River Parkway

- Hiking Trail Maintenance

Back Bay

- Invasive Species Control

Baran Park

- USGS Tree Swallow Study

Bayview Park

- Invasives Species Control

Bender Park

- Hiking Trail Maintenance
- Wildlife Surveys
- Invasive Species Control
- Wildlife Habitat Management
- Backyard Bio-diversity Event

Bradford Beach

- Invasive Species Control-Basins

Brown Deer Park

- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Cambridge Woods

- Invasive Species Control

Copernicus Park

- Invasive Species Control
- Hiking Trail Maintenance

County Grounds Park

- Invasive Species Control
- Wildlife Surveys

Cudahy Park

- Hiking Trail Maintenance

Cudahy Natural Preserve

- Invasive Species Control-Ken Solis
- Hiking Trail Maintenance

Dale Creek

- Invasive Species Control

Dineen Park

- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Doctors Park

- Friends of Doctor's Park– Weed-out
- Reforestation Project

Doyne Park

- Invasive Species Control
- Hiking Trail Maintenance

Dretzka Golf Course

- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey
- Youth Education Day

East-side Bike Trail

- Invasive Species Control

Estabrook Park

- Friends of Estabrook Park– Weed-out
- Eagle Scout– Railing Replacement
- Hiking Trail re-route –Friends Group
- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Falk Park

- Invasive Species Control
- Eagle Scout Projects-Trails
- Wildlife Habitat Management
- Hiking Trail Maintenance

2014 Natural Areas Management Locations

Franklin Oak Savanna

- Youth Education Day-Franklin HS Eco-Club
- Wildlife Surveys

Gordon Park

- Invasive Species Control

Grant Park

- Hiking Trail Maintenance
- Friends of Grant Park-Weed-out
- Rain Garden Installation-SCA , REAL Academy, South Milwaukee HS
- Reforestation Project– UWM Conservation Club, REAL Academy, AmeriCorps
- Invasive Species Control
- Purple Loosestrife Beetle Release Site
- Youth Education Days

Grantosa Creek

- Invasive Species Control

Greene Park

- Hiking Trail Maintenance

Greenfield Park

- Hiking Trail Maintenance
- Invasive Species Control
- Eagle Scout-Benches and Wood Duck Houses
- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Grobschmidt Park

- Wildlife Surveys
- Invasive Species Control
- Hiking Trail Maintenance —SCA
- Youth Education Days

Hansen Golf Course

- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Holler Park

- David Ciepluch-Weed-out
- Hiking Trail Maintenance

Honey Creek Parkway

- Weed-out –Rich Stevens
- Wildlife Surveys

Hoyt Park

- Hoyt Park Friends—Weed-out

Jackson Park

- Hiking Trail Maintenance
- Eagle Scout– Picnic Tables and Wood Duck Houses

Jacobus Park

- Hiking Trail Maintenance
- Friends of Jacobus-Weed-out
- Invasive Species Control
- Wildlife Surveys
- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Juneau Park

- Invasive Species Control
- UWM Service Learning Workday

Kinnickinnic River Parkway

- Invasive Species Control-AmeriCorps and Alverno Team Green Pull-a-thon
- Hiking Trail Maintenance

Kletzsch Park

- Friends of Kletzsch Park-Weed-out
- Wildlife Surveys

2014 Natural Areas Management Locations

Kohl Park

- Hiking Trail Maintenance

Kosciuszko Park

- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Lake Park

- Invasive Species Control
- UWM Service Learning Park
- Native Plant Installation-Lake Park Friends
- Hiking Trail Maintenance
- Lake Park Friends Weed-out

Lincoln Creek

- Invasive Species Control

Little Menomonee River Parkway

- Invasive Species Control
- Grassland Restoration Project
- Hiking Trail Maintenance
- Wildlife Surveys

McGovern Park

- Invasive Species Control
- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey
- Hiking Trail Maintenance

McCarty Park

- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Menomonee River Parkway

- Invasive Species Control
- Wildlife Surveys
- Community and REI Weed-outs
- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Milwaukee River Parkway

- Invasive Species Control
- Wildlife Surveys

Mitchell Park

- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Mitchell Blvd Park

- Story Hill Neighborhood Association Weed-out
- Invasive Species Control

Noyes Park

- Invasive Species Control
- Hiking Trail Maintenance
- Wildlife Surveys
- UWM Service Learning Park
- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Oak Creek Parkway

- Invasive Species Control
- Wildlife Surveys
- Hiking Trail Re-route -SCA
- Youth Education Day

Rawson Park

- Invasive Species Control
- Hiking Trail Maintenance
- Youth Education Days

Riverside Park

- Wildlife Surveys –UEC
- Invasive Species Control-UEC

2014 Natural Areas Management Locations

Root River Parkway

- Invasive Species Control
- Native Plant Installation
- Hiking Trail Maintenance
- Youth Education Days
- Hunger Task Force Restorations

South Shore Park

- South Shore Park Watch-Weed-out & Native Plant Installation
- Wildlife Surveys

Uihlein Park

- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Underwood Creek Parkway

- Invasive Species Control
- Native Plantings
- Hiking Trail Maintenance

Veterans Park

- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey

Washington Park

- Aquatic Invasive Species Survey
- Invasive Species Control—UEC

Warnimont Park

- Invasive Species Control
- Hiking Trail Stabilization & Maintenance-SCA
- Wildlife Surveys
- Native Plant Installation
- Purple Loosestrife Beetle Release site– UWM Conservation Club

Wilson Park

- Invasive Species Control-Lowell Elementary

Zablocki Park

- Invasive Species Control

Report Abbreviations:

SCA– Student Conservation Association

UEC– Urban Ecology Center

UWM– University of Wisconsin Milwaukee

USGS– U.S. Geological Survey

59 Park & Parkway Sites in 2014!

Natural Areas Wildlife Surveys

Why Do we Conduct Wildlife Surveys?

Knowing the full spectrum of species, whether flora or fauna, allows Parks staff to manage natural areas using the best techniques, conduct restoration work at the right time of year, and most importantly it allows us to measure the success of our site specific restoration goals. While we do have a fairly comprehensive idea of the flora in our Park System **(698 species of documented plants),** our understanding of breeding and migratory wildlife populations is still evolving. Inventorying wildlife populations is a fairly new practice for the Parks Department. No internal studies had been conducted prior to five years ago so we don't have historical population data to consider which makes collecting baseline data all the more important. Observing how wildlife populations fluctuate during our restoration projects gives us a direct window into how successful we are in improving the ecological functions and values of our natural areas.

What Type of Surveys are Conducted?

Staff conduct wildlife surveys for snakes, amphibians (frogs, toads, and salamanders), aquatic invertebrates (crayfish), turtles, and breeding, migratory, and wintering birds. We follow standardized scientific protocols when we collect data so it's comparable to other organizations collecting similar data within SE Wisconsin, because wildlife movement is based on habitat and not municipal boundaries. Monitoring wildlife populations is one of the best measures of ecological health and restoration project success. With that in mind, staff and volunteers conducted snake monitoring surveys at **6 sites**, crayfish surveys at **20 sites**, breeding bird surveys at **9 sites**, turtle surveys at **6 sites**, migratory bird surveys at **11 sites,** and winter bird surveys at **11 sites**.

Are Urban Natural Areas Refuges for Rare Species of Wildlife?

Let's take a look. The Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative's All Bird Plan lists 118 species as birds of conservation priority in Wisconsin. Out of those **118 bird species, 102 (86%)** have been reported as being seen either during migration or during the breeding season within the Park System or in the near shore waters of Lake Michigan adjacent to the Park System's 14 lake side parks. In addition, looking at all of the wildlife populations that have been observed to date (birds, herptiles, invertebrates, mammals) within the Park System's natural areas, **73 species** are listed in the Wisconsin DNR's state-wide Wildlife Action Plan as **"species of greatest conservation need."** This impressive ecological diversity is a testament to enduring value of the Park System's natural areas and the unwavering management needed to preserve its integrity well into the future.

The most remarkable aspect of the data collected during our wildlife surveys is that staff and volunteers have only surveyed approximately **33%** of the Park System's natural areas so far. The goal is of course **100%**, so there's plenty of opportunity to discover more species in the future. As the Parks Department and partner organizations undertake wildlife habitat improvement projects within the Park System, there are many sites for the more mobile species of wildlife to reestablish breeding populations and in certain cases the Parks Department may have to consider reintroduction for the less mobile wildlife species.

Natural Areas Education & Outreach Efforts

Higher Education

University Service Learning projects require students to undertake a variety of community service activities. Natural areas projects revolve around ecological restoration and hiking trail installation. Natural Areas staff worked with **40 students this** year at **16 parks**. Students participated through the **UW-Milwaukee's Institute for Service Learning.**

Community Education & Outreach

Urban natural resource management requires an engaged and educated community. It is always a priority for us to take the Natural Areas Program to the people. This past year staff gave **28 presentations** to **833 citizens**. In addition, the Natural Areas Program continued to expand its hands-on learning opportunities for area high schools (REAL Academy, Franklin HS Eco-Club, Greendale HS, and South Milwaukee HS) in 2014. The Natural Areas Program regularly posted events and programs on its **Facebook page** which includes many pictures of this year's activities. So check it out to be kept up to date on what's happening with our natural areas and be sure to "like" us!

Citizen Science Program

In order to continue effectively managing the 10,000-acre Natural Areas Program, staff needs to engage all stakeholders in the stewardship process. The development of a Citizen Science (Cit-Sci) Program within the Natural Areas Program is an excellent opportunity to create collaborations between diverse groups of volunteers. The incorporation of citizen scientists into our natural resource inventories allows for the strengthening of an already well-built partnership between the Natural Areas Program and its volunteers, which will likely lead to many new partnerships. Cit-Sci volunteers also participated in science based surveys at **Bender Park**, **Grant Park, Rawson Park, Grobschmidt Park,** and along the **Oak Creek Parkway.**

Natural Areas Internship Program

Training the next generation of natural resource managers should be one of the most important components of any natural areas program. The Natural Areas Program extended its internship opportunity to **3 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee** students this past year.

Interns were provided training in natural areas management which included: equipment use, natural resource data collection, participating in aquatic invasive species surveys, wildlife habitat projects (reforestation plantings and pollinator gardens), invasive species control, wildlife surveys, and plant/wildlife identification skill development.

In return for this learning experience, our interns donated **398 hours** towards helping us achieve our natural areas goals. Their efforts and personal sacrifices to further their careers and give back to the Milwaukee County community have been a daily inspiration for the rest of the staff and myself. It has been a privilege to work with each of our dedicated interns. Our interns this past year were: **Samantha Geyer, Justin Reineke,** and **Stacy Cappaert**.

Natural Areas Hiking Trail System

While staff greatly encourages the interaction between citizens and our diverse natural areas, it is important that it is done in a sustainable manner. One of the ways the Parks Department and its partners provide this experience is through the **Forked Aster Hiking Trail System.**

Staff, working with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), AmeriCorps, Service Learners, and Eagle Scouts we were able to stabilize and enhance **27 miles** of existing hiking trails spread over **26 parks** in 2014. Building on the trail improvement success of the past few years, there are now more than **43 miles** of sustainable hiking trails within the Park System's natural areas for residents to enjoy.

Trail maintenance and restoration is an ongoing project and great strides were made this past year. Upon completion of our current enhancement of historic trails, the **Forked Aster Hiking Trail System** will eventually provide approximately **50 miles** of designated hiking trails within the Park System for park users to enjoy while protecting the natural resources that add to the quality of our citizens' lives.

To view and download pdf maps of Forked Aster Hiking Trail segments throughout the county visit the Park Department's webpage at **http://http://county.milwaukee.gov/ForkedAsterTrail**

Natural Areas Land Management & Resource Planning Activities

Thanks to our partners, volunteers, donors, and additional staff resources from the Parks Department 2014 was another great year for restoration projects. Accomplishments included:

- Removal and control of **25** different invasive plant species at **45 parks and parkways**.
- Many natural areas within the Park System have historic plant inventories conducted by the Southeastern WI Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC). As staff go about their restoration projects they document new species when they are found and SEWRPC conducts surveys to update their plant lists. **Nine new species were added in 2014**, eight natives, and unfortunately one new invasive (**Greater Celandine**). Sadly, we also lost one endangered specie of plant in 2014 (**Heart-leaved Plantain**) when an adjacent property owner made decisions that negatively impacted adjacent park land.
- Staff continued the program's **ephemeral ponds inventory project.** The five year study has added **403 ephemeral pond** locations within the Park System. Ephemeral ponds are the main breeding and nursery areas for the majority of our native amphibian species, and important feeding areas for early season migratory birds because these are typically the first areas where insects hatch in spring.
- Staff and partners trained **1,405 volunteers** that donated **15,741 hours** to improving our natural areas.
- Staff and partners conducted ecological restoration activities that benefited **1,169 acres** of natural areas.
- Staff implemented Restoration & Management plans for **Bender, Cudahy Nature Preserve, Falk, Grant, Greenfield, Grobschmidt, Jacobus, McGovern, Noyes, Warnimont, and a section of the Little Menomonee River Parkway.**

The Financial Value of the Natural Areas Program

2014 Financial Investment in Natural Areas

Ecological restoration can require specialized equipment, herbicides, planting materials, educational resources, and trained staff, all of which can financially add up and prevent worthy projects from being undertaken. Fortunately, the Natural Areas Program has been able to leverage outside resources through grants and donations from partner organizations and volunteers. In 2014 the Natural Areas Program received:

$118,952 Grants or cooperative agreements (**WI DNR, GLRI, & Fund for Lake Michigan**)
$10,825 Donations of materials, equipment, cash, or staff time (**Lake Park Friends, OWLT, SE WI PF**)
$353,838 Donated labor from volunteers (based on standardized rates published by the Independent Sector)
$73,612 Agricultural Lease Program and the CRP program that is managed by the Natural Areas Program
$44,400 Assisting with implementing the County's Land and Water Conservation Plan
$139,534 Funding from the Park Department's budget out of the County tax levy

A total value of $741,161 towards ecological restoration and community outreach and education.

Special Projects for 2014

- The Natural Areas Program continued its long standing partnership with **AmeriCorps** by hosting one fall crew this past year. We were fortunate and excited to the share the crew with the **River Revitalization Foundation (RRF)** to undertake invasive species removal projects along the **Milwaukee and KK Rivers**.

- Our partnership with the **Student Conservation Association** and **Johnson Controls** is a special project for our staff each and every year. The tireless efforts of these young men and women continues to make significant contributions to public accessibility within our natural areas (hiking trail construction) as well as improving the ecological health (invasive species removal). The opportunity to work directly with an organization so completely dedicated to the advancement and sustainability of urban youth is truly an inspiration for the Natural Areas staff. This year SCA worked at **Copernicus, Warnimont, Grobschmidt, and Noyes parks** as well as along the **Root River, Oak Creek, Underwood Creek Parkways.** A special thank-you to Program Manager, August Marie Ball, her crew leaders, assistant crew leaders, and crew members for their enthusiasm, dedication, and leadership.

- We can't say thank you enough to our grant funders and partners who provided the resources that allowed us to implement restoration projects and expand our natural resource surveys. The **WI DNR** provided funding for staff and equipment to conduct aquatic invasive species surveys of the Park System's lagoons, wildlife surveys along the **Little Menomonee River, Menomonee River, and Milwaukee River Parkways,** and a large grassland restoration project along the **Little Menomonee River Parkway** just north of Appleton Avenue. The **Fund for Lake Michigan** provided the second year of funding to install green infrastructure/wildlife habitat projects at **Grant** and **Bender Parks** (reforestation, rain gardens, and prairie plantings). While the **Southeast Wisconsin Chapter of Pheasants Forever** graciously provided financial support for youth education by funding the purchase of a bird education kit (binoculars and bird identification manuals) that Natural Areas staff can use to teach birding skills and promote wildlife conservation to high school students that work with the Natural Areas Program on Citizen Science projects.

Natural Areas Notable Partnerships for 2014

The Park People Weed-outs

Hands down, one of our most important and sustained partnerships. Weed-outs to remove invasive species were conducted in spring and/or in fall at **Doctors, Estabrook, Grant, Holler, Honey Creek Parkway, Hoyt, Jacobus, Kletzsch, Lake, Menomonee River Parkway, Mitchell Blvd, Oak Creek Parkway (Mill Pond), and South Shore Parks**. These Weed-outs significantly improved the quality of our natural areas, and we are greatly appreciative of the Park People's consistent and tireless efforts to guide and nurture volunteers **(959 in 2014)** in a sense of community enrichment. Thank you **Jim Goulee** and **John Lunz** for your tireless leadership.

Lake Park Friends

The Lake Parks Friends once again stepped up and showed their conservation leadership by funding a Natural Areas seasonal position in 2014. This has been an excellent partnership that has allowed us to jointly achieve our natural areas goals for Lake Park. Staff worked on invasive species removal and design assistance for another new native tree and shrub planting at Lake Park this past fall. A special thank you to the Lake Park Friends **Nature Committee** for their efforts to build and nurture this continuing partnership.

Eagle Scouts Projects

Experiencing conservation at a young age often solidifies an individual's natural resource perspectives for life. This year scouts built hiking trail boardwalks, puncheons, trailhead kiosks, Leopold benches, and installed trail-side railings. Our sincerest thank you to the following young men and their families: **Ryan Simmons, Alex Nogalski, Ben Pike, Jacob Selby, Atinuwa Brown, Tyler Jankowski, Cedric Olinger, Nicholas Plewa, and Daniel Plewa.**

Neighborhood Associations & Friends Groups

Too many outstanding partners to list in such a small space. Once again they donated their time, expertise, knowledge, and funding in order to enhance not just their local parks but also the larger Park System. At the end of the day, these parks belong to county residents, and they have shown an overwhelming desire to preserve the natural places that make our County unique.

The Hunger Task Force

Several years ago the Parks Department entered into a land management partnership with the Hunger Task Force (HTF) in the section of the Root River Parkway on the west side of the river behind the Farm & Fish Hatchery. This natural area contains a diversity of habitats such as bottomland forest, ephemeral wetlands, surrogate grasslands, and even a small remnant oak savanna. The HTF solidified the restoration work by hiring a full-time Land Manager to oversee and undertake all restoration activities in these natural areas. The HTF land Manager, **Adam Romanak**, and his volunteers have aggressively removed invasive species, restored the oak savanna structure, seeded native plants, reintroduced prescribed fire to the site, and resurrected a long forgotten hiking trail system. Thank you Adam and HTF for your outstanding commitment helping to restore the Park System's natural areas!

Volunteers of Significance 2014

- **Jim Price**– Jim has long supported conservation within the Milwaukee County Park System with a special focus on Jacobus Park and more recently County Grounds Park. As a strong and knowledgeable advocate for native plants and for the removal of invasive species, Jim's steadfast leadership has helped preserve many rare plant species. In 2014, Jim built upon his previous work and donated native plants, he grew from local seed, to the Natural Areas Program so they could be planted as part of our program's restoration projects at Grant, Warnimont, Noyes, and portions of the Underwood Creek and Menomonee River Parkways. Our sincerest thank you Jim!
- **Milwaukee County Park System Birders**-Though Milwaukee County Birders may not currently consider themselves as a part of the Natural Areas Program's volunteer corps, they have certainly provided our staff with a great deal of wildlife data by entering their bird observations into Cornell's **eBird.org** website. Natural Areas staff use this public database to make land management decisions, apply for grants focused on wildlife habitat, and guide long-term conservation efforts within the Park System's 10,000-acre Natural Areas Program. Keep up the great work Birders!

Patience and Perspective

My mother has always warned me that the years quicken as one ages. The more years I place behind me the more I contemplate the sage advice hidden within her words. The constant push of time and its lack of anything that resembles patience is unrelenting. I'll turn 40 before the next Annual Report in 2015, which gives me a moment of pause realizing that I am at the halfway point in my career. Reflecting on what has been accomplished and what remains to be done reminds me of one of my favorite J.R.R. Tolkien quotes, "All we have to do is decide what to do with the time that is given us." Seemingly simple advice.

This will be my seventh Annual Report as your Natural Areas Coordinator. Looking back, I'm incredibly proud of what we have been able to accomplish together when so many had given up hope of wise management of our natural areas. Seven years of sacrifice by literally thousands of people restoring our natural heritage and becoming the stewards we were always meant to be. Through those efforts, native plants and wildlife in our Park System have become more common, invasive species have declined, and hiking trails have sprung forth under the filtered sunlight of aged oaks. A commitment by a natural areas community that allows us to continue moving in a strong, sustainable direction.

One of the most challenging aspects of being the Natural Areas Coordinator is deciding which natural areas undergo restoration, which have healed to the point where they need only yearly maintenance, and which sadly are allowed to slip deeper into the shadows. The decisions, even though they are based on the best science, realistic logistics, and a vision, are never easy. Every choice, no matter how it can be justified, is in the end always personal.

However, managing natural areas is not like building a structure where choice A automatically leads to outcome B. Instead natural areas are fluid, like waves cresting and falling on Lake Michigan, where every wave is influenced by the wave next to it, the wind above it, the lake bed below it, and many other unseen subtleties. As we accomplish the obvious tasks within natural areas such as: removing invasives, creating sustainable public use, and inventorying plant and wildlife populations, we are led to more complex questions. What type of woodland do we want this to be 100 years from now? Should we maintain the oaks and hickories and cut down the maples and basswoods, or do we let the oak woodlands fade into memory with the wildlife that are bound to them? Do we reintroduce species of wildlife (amphibians and reptiles) that have been extirpated from portions of the Park System? Should we use native plant seed from adjacent counties in order to bolster native plant communities that have become isolated within the Park System? Do we use trees species in our reforestations that are from slightly more southern climates? Should we begin to control overabundant species of wildlife that are detrimental to the ecology of the Park System? There are no easy answers to these questions or the dozens of others that need to be asked and answered. It falls on us to find the best answers and act upon them as much for the natural areas of the future as the ones that are with us today. We'll do it together as we always have and do our best to decide "…. what to do with the time that is given us."

Sincerely,

Brian Russart
Natural Areas Coordinator
Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation & Culture
University of Wisconsin Extension

Natural Areas Mission Statement

Blending Milwaukee County's Diverse and Unique Natural Areas With Its Culturally Rich Communities to Preserve and Nurture Its Natural Heritage for Current and Future Generations

Natural Areas Staff 2014

Natural Areas Coordinator	*Brian Russart*
Assistant Natural Areas Coordinator	*Julia Robson*
Stewardship Coordinator	*Cassie Brayton*
Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator	*Lea Cutsforth*
Land Management Technicians	*Demetra Toniolo, Konnie Her, Sierra Taliaferro, Mary McQuiggin, Jessica Quinlan*
Wildlife Technicians	*Marcus Mueller and Ryan Glasford*
Natural Areas Interns	*Samantha Geyer, Justin Reineke, Stacy Cappaert*